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Construction continues to advance at Pretreatment Facility

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Suzanne Heaston, Bechtel National, Inc., (509) 371-2329

Carrie Meyer, Department of Energy, (509) 372-0810

Richland, Wash. -- Recently, Hanford Waste Treatment Plant crews lifted and placed a nearly 9-ton rebar curtain above the 77-foot elevation at the Pretreatment Facility. The curtain measures 36 feet long, 22 feet high and is the last curtain to compose the facility's fifth concrete elevation. Rebar curtains are used to reinforce the strength of the concrete.

When complete, the Pretreatment Facility will comprise six concrete wall elevations and reach a total height of 109 feet. Steel columns and roof trusses will extend beyond the walls to an overall height of 120 feet, and the emissions stack will reach nearly 200 feet. Currently, construction of the Pretreatment Facility is more than 36 percent complete.



Photo 1 of 2

(continued)



Photo 2 of 2

Bechtel National, Inc. is designing and building the world's largest radioactive waste treatment plant for the U.S. Department of Energy at the Hanford Site in southeastern Washington state. The \$12.2 billion Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant (WTP), also known as the "Vit Plant," will immobilize the radioactive liquid waste currently stored in 177 underground tanks using a process called "vitrification."

Vitrification involves blending the waste with molten glass and heating it to high temperatures. The mixture is then poured into stainless steel canisters. In this glass form, the waste is stable and impervious to the environment, and its radioactivity will dissipate over hundreds to thousands of years.

The WTP will cover 65 acres with four nuclear facilities -- Pretreatment, Low-Activity Waste Vitrification, High-Level Waste Vitrification and Analytical Laboratory -- as well as operations and maintenance buildings, utilities and office space.

Construction of the WTP began in 2001 and is now 59 percent complete. Construction is scheduled to be complete in 2016 and operational in 2019.